

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0606

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BG, IN

SUBJECT: BANGALEES CONTINUE CRITICISM OF INDIA

SUMMARY: THE BANGALEES CONTINUED TO CRITICIZE INDIA IN TRENCANT TERMS THROUGH YESTERDAY (FEBRUARY 2) ABOUT THE INCIDENTS ALONG THE BORDER WITH MEGHALAYA. ALTHOUGH THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE TROUBLES MAY NOT RPT NOT SEEM TO WARRANT THE VIGOR OF THE BANGALEE CAMPAIGN, DACCA MAY BE TRYING TO PUT NEW DELHI ON NOTICE THAT SUCH HAPPENINGS MUST STOP. IT MAY, OF COURSE, HAVE AN EYE ON WORLD OPINION AND BE ENDEAVORING TO ELICIT SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BANGALEES CONTINUED THROUGH MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, TO VOICE CONCERN OVER AND CRITICISM OF PURPORTED INDIAN SUPPORT FOR MISCREANTS IN THE AREA ALONG THE BORDER WITH MEGHALAYA. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, THEY SOUGHT TO USE THE VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN DIGGS, JUST AS THEY HAD THAT OF SENATOR MCGOVERN, TO DELINEATE DANGEROUS ACTS BY INDIA. IN PUBLIC, THE CHARACTER OF THEIR CRITICISM, HAS MOREOVER, TAKEN A NEW DIRECTION, APPARENTLY REFLECTING A CONCLUSION THAT THE JANUARY 30 STATEMENT BY A SPOKESMAN OF THE
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INDIAN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CHALLENGING BANGALEE

ALLEGATIONS (REPORTED IN NEW DELHI 1506) REQUIRED A MORE CONFRONTATIONAL STANCE. THUS, A MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN VOICED THE "SURPRISE AND REGRET" OF THE BDG AT THE INDIAN STATEMENT. THE BANGALEE RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN COMPLAINT WAS VERY MUCH AN EXERCISE IN HAND-WASHING, WITH THE SPOKESMAN STRESSING (I) THAT BANGLADESH HAD DONE NOTHING TO VOID THE UNDERSTANDING RE "GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS" STRUCK DURING THE VISIT OF JUSTICE SATTAR TO NEW DELHI; (II) THAT THE BANGALEE PRESS ACCOUNTS OF TROUBLE ADDED NOTHING TO WHAT WAS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE; (III) THAT THE BDG HAS ALREADY URGED A MEETING OF THE HEADS OF THE BDR AND THE BSF; (IV) THAT THE BDG IS NOT RPT NOT FOSTERING ANTI-INDIAN FEELING BUT RATHER WANTS ONLY TO "STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP" WITH ALL...NEIGHBORS"; (V) THAT THE INDIAN SPOKESMAN'S REFERENCE TO "DOMESTIC COMPULSIONS" IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE SINCE "PEACE AND STABILITY" PREVAIL THROUGHOUT BANGLADESH.

2. IF THE MFA SPOKESMAN'S TONE WAS THAT OF WOUNDED SENSIBILITY, IT WAS LEFT TO THE WEEKLY HOLIDAY, STILL INTIMATELY IDENTIFIED WITH IF NOT RPT NOT ACTUALLY RUN BY ENEYATULLAH KHAN, TO PLACE A BANGALEE THUMB IN THE INDIAN EYE. OF THE FIVE ARTICLES CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE FEBRUARY 1 ISSUE, THREE DEALT WITH THE INIQUITOUS BEHAVIOUR OF THE INDIANS AND ANOTHER, CLEARLY RELATED ARTICLE ASSERTED THAT "CLOSE BANGLA-PAK RELATIONS POSSIBLE". (THE FIFTH ARTICLE WAS A TYPICAL, TURGID MARXIST EXERGESIS ON INVESTMENT POLICY.) ONE OF THE ANTI-INDIAN PIECES -- "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO NEIGHBORLINESS" -- TOLD, AMONG OTHER THINGS, OF THE TRAINING WHICH HAS ALLEGEDLY BEEN GIVEN IN INDIA TO BANGALEES WHO FLED THE COUNTRY AFTER AUGUST 15 AND URGED THE RECALL OF THE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSIONER. ANOTHER -- "REVEALING INCIDENTS" -- DWELT ON THE TROUBLES ALONG THE MEGHALAYA BOUNDARY AND MADE MUCH OF "BEARDED, NON-BANGALEES" FIGHTING ALONGSIDE OF THE MISCREANTS; IT ADDED NONE COULD BE CAPTURED GIVEN HEAVY FIRING BY THE BSF AS THE GROUP WITHDREW. "FARAKKA TAKING ITS TOLL" CAPTIONED THE THIRD, A STORY WHICH TOLD OF HEAVY WITHDRAWALS OF WATER FROM THE GANGA AT FARAKKA BARRAGE WHICH HAVE CONFRONTED

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BANGLADESH WITH NAVIGATIONAL PROBLEMS, DECLINING GROUND-WATER RESOURCES, DAMAGE TO FISHERIES, AND INCREASED SALINITY IN CERTAIN AREAS. AND THE PIECE OF PAK-BANGALEE RELATIONS FOCUSES ON THE SEARCH FOR FRIENDS AGAINST INDIA AND ITS "INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATOR".

3. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BANGALEES ARE ON THE OFFENSIVE, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. WHAT IS UNCLEAR IS

THE REASON FOR THEIR STURDY WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK WITH SUCH CRISPNESS TO THEIR LARGE AND PRICKLY NEIGHBOR. SINCE SENDING DACCA 0570 AND 0571, WE HAVE LEARNED LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE TROUBLES ON THE BORDER WITH MEGHALAYA, AND SUSPECT THAT THEY WERE ISOLATED AND SHORT-LIVED. IN LIGHT OF THE BARRAGE OF PUBLICITY GIVEN THE ISSUE, WE CAN SPECULATE THAT THE BANGALEES MAY BE ENGAGING IN A SORT OF PRE-EMPTIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN; WE HEAR THE REPORTS THAT BANGALEES WHO FLED TO INDIA AFTER AUGUST 15 HAVE JUST COMPLETED, OR ARE JUST ABOUT TO COMPLETE, TRAINING FOR INSURRECTIONARY INTERVENTION IN BANGLADESH, AND CONCEIVABLY THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN MAY BE INTENDED TO WARN THE INDIANS AWAY. A SECOND POSSIBILITY COULD BE AN ATTEMPT BY THE BANGALEES TO PUFF A RELATIVELY MINOR BORDER INCIDENT INTO SOMETHING THAT SEEMS TO BE MORE FOR FOREIGN CONSUMPTION; THEY HAVE BEEN ENERGETIC IN THE SEARCH FOR ARMS -- AND, WE SUPPOSE, THE WHEREWITHAL TO COVER THEIR COST -- AND A DEMONSTRABLE DANGER MAY BE SEEN AS PART OF THE EFFORT TO PRY LOOSE MILITARY HARDWARE. A THIRD, AND PERHAPS MOST LIKELY, POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE BANGALEES, WHOSE INTELLIGENCE IS NONE TOO RELIABLE, SEE THE MEGHALAYA INCIDENTS AS SERIOUS EFFORTS BY THE INDIANS TO PRECIPITATE TROUBLE AND ARE SIMPLY PLACING THE MATTER BEFORE THE PUBLIC GAZE, REMEMBERING THAT SUCH A TACTIC IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER BROUGHT THEM HELP. BOSTER

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